

The Gift of Joy

Message 4 of 5 in the series: "The Gift that Keeps on Giving"

A. The Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit (godly character qualities) in us so we can live abundant lives.

"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it **more abundantly**." John 10:10b (NKJV)

"But **the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives**: love, **joy**, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Galatians 5:22-23a (NLT)

B. The Christmas story reminds us that Jesus came into our world to bring abundant joy to all people, everywhere.

Joy = great delight or cheerfulness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying; elation.

"That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. **'I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.** The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.' Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.' When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, 'Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger." Luke 2:8-16 (NLT)

1. Jesus' birth is good news that brings great joy because Jesus came to pay the penalty for our sins and make it possible for us to have a personal relationship with God. "Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. Yes, **what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of sin.**" Romans 4:7-8 (NLT)

"So **now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God** because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God." Romans 5:11 (NLT)

2. Jesus' birth is good news that brings great joy because He came into our world to make it possible for us to have eternal life. "For this is how God loved the world: **He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.**" John 3:16 (NLT)

"All who seek the LORD will praise him. **Their hearts will rejoice with everlasting joy.**" Psalm 22:26b (NLT)

3. Jesus made it possible for anyone who believes in Him to overflow with joy. "I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. **Yes, your joy will overflow!**" John 15:11 (NLT)

"Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! **Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'** (When he said 'living water,' he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)" John 7:37b-39 (NLT)

C. God wants us to become joyful people whose lives are always filled to overflowing with joy.

"**Always be full of joy in the Lord.** I say it again—rejoice!" Philippians 4:4 (NLT) (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

1. We can always be full of joy if we stay connected to God, the source of joy. "You make known to me the path of life; **you will fill me with joy in your presence...** Psalm 16:11a (NIV)

"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and **you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.**" John 15:4 (NLT)

2. We can always be full of joy if we trust in the Lord rather than our selves/others/circumstances. "The LORD is my strength and shield. **I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy.** I burst out in songs of thanksgiving." Psalm 28:7 (NLT)

"I know the LORD is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. **No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice.** My body rests in safety." Psalm 16:8-9 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! The Holy Spirit develops us into unconditionally joyful people by giving us numerous opportunities to offer sacrifices of praise (praising God even when life is hard). “Therefore, **let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God**, proclaiming our allegiance to his name.” Hebrews 13:15 (NLT) “**Whatever happens**, my dear brothers and sisters, **rejoice** in the Lord.” Philippians 3:1a (NLT)

“**Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds**, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-5 (NIV)

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. **Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven...**” Matthew 5:11-12 (NIV)

IMPORTANT! To stay filled with joy we need to stay away from things that steal our joy.

“**When I refused to confess my sin**, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.” Psalm 32:3-4 (NLT)

“Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. **Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God**. You must warn each other every day, while it is still ‘today,’ so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.” Hebrews 3:12-13 (NLT)

“And ‘don’t sin by letting anger control you.’ **Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.**” Ephesians 4:26-27 (NLT) (Psalm 4:4)

D. The Holy Spirit produces overflowing joy in our lives, so we have plenty of joy to share with others.

1. We can share the joy God gives us by telling others about Jesus. “We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. **We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.**” 1 John 1:3-4 (NLT)
2. We can share the joy God gives us with others by bringing cheerful attitudes to work, school, etc. “**A cheerful heart is good medicine**, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” Proverbs 17:22 (NIV)
“Don’t be dejected and sad, for **the joy of the LORD is your strength!**” Nehemiah 8:10b (NLT)
3. We can share the joy God gives us with others by praising and worshipping God together. “But **let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them sing joyful praises forever**. Spread your protection over them, that all who love your name may be filled with joy.” Psalm 5:11 (NLT)

J O H N S C H M I D T • 12-22-24 • john@centeringlives.com

A few more Bible verses about joy to ponder:

“This is the day the LORD has made. **We will rejoice and be glad in it.**” Psalm 118:24 (NLT)

“**I will be glad and rejoice in your unfailing love**, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul.” Psalm 31:7 (NLT)

“So be truly glad. **There is wonderful joy ahead**, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while.” 1 Peter 1:6 (NLT)

“But let the godly rejoice. Let them be glad in God’s presence. **Let them be filled with joy.**” Psalm 68:3 (NLT)

“Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, **yet I will rejoice in the Lord!** I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!” Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NLT)

“Though you do not see him now, **you trust him; and you rejoice** with a glorious, inexpressible joy.” 1 Peter 1:8b (NLT)

“Those who have been ransomed by the Lord will return. **They will enter Jerusalem singing, crowned with everlasting joy**. Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be filled with joy and gladness.” Isaiah 51:11 (NLT)